2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

meet at the appointed place on a given day, the younger folk also being allowed to be present. The disputants would carry on a wordy conflict through their selected representatives, lasting for days on end sometimes, if the cases required it, and the question as to which side had won would be decided by the vote of all the elders assembled. Many local differences were settled in this way, though the tribal quarrels were more difficult and arms were at times resorted to or night raids made. The assembly also determined what fines, if any, were to be imposed. This plan suited the people well and they abode faithfully by the decisions arrived at. The fines usually consisted of the skins of animals, dried fish, beautiful seal-skin garments or heirlooms.

It should be understood that the Ainu settlements were mostly along the rivers. Those dwelling near the river banks in any district would lay claim to these as their own peculiar property in which to fish, and to the surrounding mountains and plains as their personal hunting domains, thus making certain territories their own private property, in which none but the owners had any right to hunt or fish. Transgression of these unwritten but well understood fishing and hunting rules meant tribal discord and intertribal quarrels. When these could not be easily settled between the villages where the poaching had taken place, the people were called together and the matter was openly considered and adjusted. In the special instances I have now in view, the "Stone of Contention" was the place chosen, and the cases were carried on in a dignified manner with all due religious and ceremonial rites and respect.

I once knew a very affable and courteous Ainu whose name meant "Mouth of Peace." For short I here call him Mr. Mo, the first syllable of his name, which means "Peace." He was quite a well-to-do man, for at the time I first knew him he had in his posses-

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

sion nearly thirty Hokkaidô ponies, a fishing boat or two, and a goodly supply of fishing nets. A more cheery and lovable person I have never met anywhere. He was one of "Nature's gentlemen," and was the recognized champion controversialist and most successful advocate for miles around his village. His services were much sought after and his fame had spread abroad to districts far away. I was by his side two days before his death, and we then had some very interesting and confidential conversation together. He actually went so far as to ask me to keep an eye on his family and see that no harm came to any of them after his decease.

Not far from Mr. Mo's house, and about midway between his village and the next, there is a stone still *in situ* which goes by the name of "Stone of Contention." This used to be the rendezvous where controversies were held and judicial cases settled. It was to this stone my friend used to go as advocate. Many times, I was told, did he go there and contend for the right. He was a wise and upright man and as honest as honest could be. He was indeed and in truth a bringer in of peace and harmony, sometimes pleading with the contending parties even with tears. This "Stone of Contention" was supposed to stand there as a witness to what was said and done. Fetishes were made and offered to it, libations presented and drunk before it, and it was a special object of veneration and worship on particular occasions, such as those now mentioned. Free speech also was allowed on these occasions.

A year or two before his death, Mr. Mo one day took me for a walk and showed me first of all a flat rock on the top of a hill, which was called the "Watch Stone." From it a good view was to be obtained, both inland and out at sea. He explained the name by telling me that the ancient Ainu, in their days, used to stand or sit on this stone, keeping watch against

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

enemy Japanese during their wars with them. It was also used as a lookout post for spotting shoals of fishes nearing the coast. Then he took me to see the places among the rocks where the men used to set their spring-bows charged with poisoned arrows. I found all this most interesting. But times have now radically changed and we may not expect to hear anything more about such goings on. How Mr. Tee was accidentally shot in the thigh and killed by one of his own arrows will be told in a later chapter, showing that Ainu poisoned arrows were not meant to be played with. 117

In respect to the "Stone of Contention" mentioned above, it is quite interesting to remark how objects used in olden times for one purpose become changed for another as the days pass by. Formerly this stone stood for peace and was worshipped as though it were alive and knew all that went on, and had some sort of magical power inherent in it. Now, however, it seems to mean, "Keep on your own side of the line or woe betide you." The stone is never resorted to now for purposes of carrying out the good old Ainu law of settlement by arbitration, and its former use is to all intents and purposes forgotten. But the stone is one more echo of a doomed race. Japanese law and methods now prevail. Still, the stone is there as a witness and I hope it will be a thundering echo of the past, and so be allowed to stand. 627 178

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

CHAPTER IX

IN THE HOME OF CHIEF PENRI

When at Piratori I always used to stay in the home of Chief Penri and his wife. While there I got a great deal of information from him. He was acting chief of that place, the old hereditary one having died. In studying him I came to the conclusion that the principal requisites of an Ainu chief were a strong, burly frame, a powerful arm, a fierce eye, a ready wit, and a big voice with which to give his commands. And he assuredly possessed these requisites in a marked degree. I have often seen the children of Piratori flee before his fiery eye and bellowing voice, almost scared out of their wits when he has suddenly caught them peeping at me through the door, windows or openings of the reed thatch of his home. I have stayed many months with him in his abode and seen numerous little displays of the art of ruling as practised by him. Woe betide the one who failed to do his bidding!

Having arrived at his place, for the first time, I at once engaged him as my teacher of Ainu, and I must say that I found him very quick at finding out just what one wanted to get at. Yet every now and again we would both lose patience and then sit and glare at each other. When this happened we would start off into the hills for a stroll and I would take my lesson so. It was during one of these strolls that I gained my spurs as a crack shot. It came about thus. As we were walking along under the trees, the chief pointed to a carrion crow sitting on a branch just ahead of us. These birds are inveterate chicken stealers and do great harm in the gardens, so he asked

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

me to try to shoot it. When travelling among the mountains, I always, at first, carried a big horse-pistol with me in case of meeting with a bear. Penri knew this. Hence his request. Well, I did not in the least expect to hit the bird, but there was a "sporting chance" for me. I fired, and lo, down came Mr. Crow, "dead as a door nail" and shot clean through the body. The old man was delighted. Going on farther we saw another, which he also asked me to kill. But, as I had thus unexpectedly won my laurels, I could not risk losing any *kudos* I had gained, by a miss. So I said, "No. You have seen what you have seen, let it suffice." And so we passed on and the poor bird was let off a scare at least. But, lo! The next morning I found myself with a tremendous reputation. I was a mighty Nimrod who never missed his mark!

All the furniture I had in the chief's hut was just one empty whisky (*saké*) barrel which I used for a seat. I did not empty it, however. That had already been done by Penri and his friends before I appeared upon the scene. As for my bed, it consisted of a few planks placed on an upraised frame and covered with a fine bearskin. For bed curtains I had home-made mats hung up round me. But, alas, my bed-fellows must have been in their millions. On getting up one warm spring morning, I found myself completely covered with red pimples and was afraid, by the feel of it, that I had contracted measles, prickly heat or some kindred complaint. So, singing out for the chief, I showed him my body and asked him what he thought was the matter with me. He comforted me by saying, "It is a mere nothing. Just flea-bites." Thus feeling comforted but not comfortable, I let it go at that, for Penri was a man of experience in such matters and knew. Since that one good inoculation, I have never been troubled over-much by these creatures.

A long time after this, when I was talking to another friend about these creatures, he told me they

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

shelled them and presented them to me nicely baked. And they were very good eating in that land of scarcity. On asking her why she crashed them, she told me it was to prevent them from bursting.

The food question being a somewhat important one, I had a talk with the chief and asked him if we could not manage to put up a small chicken house and keep a few hens. He readily agreed to the proposal, so in a couple of days or so we had a lodge built of sticks and reeds all ready. We then went down to a Japanese village at the seashore and bought two birds, which we put into the little place. All went well for the first five days and I had an egg daily. But after that, although the hen cackled every day as usual, we could find no egg, and I was greatly disappointed. This went on for several days and I made up my mind to sit in the shed and so try to solve the problem. As I sat watching, behold, on the very first morning what should happen but, as soon as ever the hen began her song, a big grey snake, some five feet long, thrust his head in from the outside right over the nest. I shouted and this made him withdraw his vicious snout sharply. I got the egg that time. The next morning I waited very quietly outside at the back and when the creature wormed his way up among the reeds and popped his head in, I gave him a whack on his back and killed him. I won also that time and got my egg. After that we had no more trouble. That year I killed no less than thirty-six snakes and vipers. On entering the hut, Penri volunteered the following information. "After a snake has swallowed an egg, he, the demon, glides off to a tree stump, winds himself round it, gives a tight squeeze and smashes it. They are very cunning demons."

Some little time after slaying my egg thief, I was startled one morning by catching sight of another large snake gliding along the rafters and in and out of the reed thatch inside the hut. Undoubtedly he

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

was searching for young sparrows. It looked very 1176
uncanny to see the reptile turning and twisting about in his progress, and I expected every moment to see him tumble down to the floor of the hut. Perhaps he was the mate of the one I had killed. Penri, who hated and feared such creatures, gave a frightened scream and stared above him in terror. I knew the old man had a long Japanese spear lying along the beams of his dwelling, and so the first thing I did was to grasp this weapon, take off its sheath and transfix the reptile with the sharp blade. Having killed him, I carried him out of the house and threw him away. But on coming in again, I found the chief full of indignation because I had killed the snake with his spear! He angrily told me that I might keep that spear, for, as it 776
had killed a demon, he would have it no longer. "It is yours now and not mine," he said. I thought it was very kind of him to give it me, but after all it was fear, and not good will, which prompted him to do so. He was afraid, as I well know now, that the snake might retaliate for what had been done to him, but now, as it was my spear which had done the deed and not his, the vengeance would fall on me and not on him! This may sound very strange, but legends will appear as we go on which will show that such are common ideas among the Ainu people.

Chief Penri had his ancient mother living with him, 593
and a veritable old hag she was. If I looked at her [592]
she always turned her back on me, and when it was quite necessary for her to face me it was always with a very savage, fierce eye and black scowl. If Mr. Black-Lily's wife was anything like her, I am not surprised at his not wanting to meet her hereafter. One face like that would surely spoil everything. If she thought her son was too communicative with me, she would show him such a malicious expression of face and give vent to such angry words that he would ask to be allowed to take a rest, and so we would go out and

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

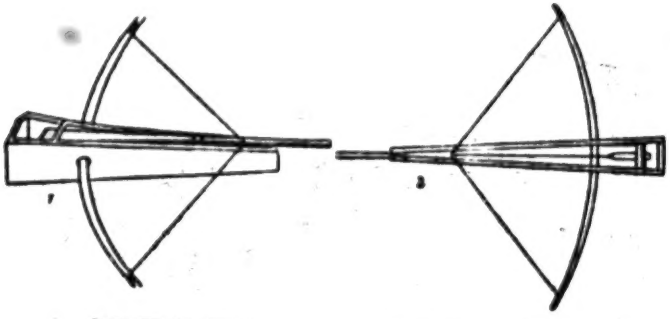
finish our lesson walking about. As for the younger Mrs. Penri, the old witch would treat her as though she were dirt beneath her feet. It was not a happy family. No wonder the chief's former wife took her own life!

I began to wonder what I could do to appease her and make her treat me with more respect and good will, and I hit upon this plan, for I must either do something or change my lodgings and so lose a good teacher. I got up early one morning and, walking fifteen miles to a Japanese shop, bought a pound of tobacco and a pound of brown sugar. On returning with these, I began by giving her small doles of each. In a very few days we were the best of friends and I gained many a smile. All went smoothly after this. Although she would occasionally act like a testy child and give way to rampaging crossness, yet on the whole, peace reigned in the family and all went well, though, when eating, she always turned her back to us.

After being with Chief Penri for some time, I asked him if he could not put me up a small room to sleep in. Just one corner of his abode would do, only it must have a board floor for me to take my rest on. He soon got another old man to help him and the pair of them forthwith made me a place. When finished it measured six feet by nine. I caused them to put a ceiling to it to keep the soot off, and earwigs and other vermin from falling on me from the thatch with which the roof was covered. But sleeping on the floor in this place was far worse than on the raised platform I had used in the open hut, for the new place at once became a playground for the rats which trooped in and took their exercise there. I often felt them during the night chasing one another over my body. At my request the chief therefore set up rat traps about my person, in which we caught not a few. Vermin were a great pest when I came first to Ainu-land.

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

A favourite way of catching rats among this people was by a trap such as the following. It consisted of a sort of oblong box having a bow so placed as to close a slide firmly to the end as soon as the animal pulled at a bait placed inside near the bottom. The slide catches the rat by the middle, the head being inside and the hind quarters outside. There is no noise made by the animal. I have taken as many as seven, one after the other, in the course of an evening, and found another caught fast in the morning. But it is a bad plan to allow other rats to see one thus caught. They seem to take the hint and seek healthier quarters at once. Fig. 1 shows the top of the trap ready set, and Fig. 2 reveals the string inside to which the bait is tied.



RAT TRAP, SET RAT TRAP, UNDERVIEW

Once about midnight Penri gave a most fearful yell, jumped up very suddenly, and rushed across to my sleeping place. Arrived there, he pushed open my sliding door and asked me why I had slipped across to his place and given his hair a pull! I was greatly astonished at this and asked what he meant. But he stuck to it that I had got up a short time ago and had come and

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

117 given his hair a mighty strong tug. I immediately arose from my bed and we proceeded to build a good fire. Here we sat for half an hour or so, arguing with one another. He swore I had pulled his wig and I swore I had not. In the end we decided that Mrs. Rat had come and tried to get a little of his hair to make her nest with. This may have been so, but very likely some of it, for it was very thick and matted, had slipped down between the boards of his bed, where it stuck and held fast when he turned over. I hardly think it was nightmare, though it may have been.

825 The next morning I recurred to the hair-pulling incident and said some hard things about rats, as I had already done about those heavenly creatures, fleas. But here again I was told that it was not right to abuse any of God's creation, and the following story was told me in explanation.

539 "After the Creator had finished making the world, He came down to see how it looked. As He was viewing His work, Satan appeared and derided Him, saying, 'Doubtless You think you have done a very good thing, but look at these brambles and thistles. What can be the use of these?' God was very angry at these remarks and in an instant made a rat. This suddenly rushed into Satan's mouth and bit his tongue out. The devil was so angry at this that he caused the rats to increase so mightily that they soon became a great scourge and plague to men. The Ainu therefore one day met together and called upon God to remedy this. He did so by making cats to keep the rats down." This was the story, and the old man added, "Let us bear with the rats, for one of them did a good thing when he bit out the tongue of Satan. Moreover, do not speak against anything God has created, for see how He punished the evil one for doing so."

342 That year I stayed a little too long at Piratori. It became so cold by December that I asked the chief's

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

CHAPTER X

THAT WICKED MISSIONARY

Not very long ago I had the honour of attending a lecture in Sapporo, at which I heard a very fine, lively and interesting speech delivered by a learned and eloquent Japanese pastor from the Capital. He was speaking to a large gathering of Sunday school delegates, among whom were one or two Christian Ainu women. All present listened with keen attention and full appreciation to the remarks of the speaker, and appeared to be thoroughly enjoying his eloquence; I among the rest. In order to make a point more clear, entertaining and readily acceptable to his audience, the lecturer very aptly cited the following story.

"Some years ago a foreign missionary went to a certain land to try to convert the inhabitants to Christianity. He found the people altogether uncivilized and given over to polygamy and cannibalism. He was exceedingly sorry for them and mourned over them not a little. Strive as he might to convert them to the better way, he could make no headway. Their ideas and general customs were so very different from what he had been used to all his life. After some little time had elapsed, however, he was greatly encouraged by a native coming and telling him that his people were assured that much of what he was teaching them was noble and excellent and said they would accept that; indeed, they would follow out most of his precepts. 'But,' said they, 'we must certainly be allowed to retain our wives, for they are so useful in many ways. There is much for them to do both indoors and out. So we do not see our way clear to become monogamists.' It

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

117 appeared to them that polygamy was not only good and useful, but a quite proper institution, so why make such a change? It would be an injustice to the women were they to be got rid of! The poor man was much distressed upon hearing this, but there was no help for it.

"Later on, the missionary left that country for a season of rest at home. But he was shouldering a heavy burden and his heart was sore within him, because he had won no converts. Upon his return the following year to the scene of his labours, he was much rejoiced to be met by a native friend who told him that he had, after much wrestling with his conscience, made up his mind to make a sacrifice and have only one wife, and had, therefore, now become a monogamist! This was great good news and the missionary was highly delighted with such a wonderful victory, 'What has become of your discarded wife?' he asked. 'I ate her up,' he replied." And so amid laughter the story ended.

However, one of the Ainu women who heard it was not at all pleased and spoke to me about it afterwards, when I found that she took quite an unexpected yet perhaps, for an Ainu, a natural view of the matter. Said she: "But, Sir, what a wicked missionary that foreigner was!" "Why, whatever do you mean?" I asked. To this she made quite a long answer. "Oh, don't you see, Sir? Was he not the direct cause first of a murder and then of surprising that poor man into an act of cannibalism. I consider him to have been a very wicked missionary. And, why? my own people
595 do not, some of them, think it wrong to have a plurality of wives. Has not Mr. So and So four of them? His first two Ainu and the other two Japanese? And does he not sometimes walk out with them all together, he first and they reverentially following after in order?" I must confess that this was news to me. But do not

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

But do not

let it be supposed for a moment that the Ainu are cannibals, for they are not so now, whatever they may have been in the past. Then the lady added, "Supposing a polygamist gets rid of any of his wives, ought he not to make them handsome presents, and should it not be by mutual consent?" I left the question unanswered. And so this case which the young lady quoted is but an echo of the Ainu past. I will add, however, before leaving this subject, that in the mind and reasoning of this lady there was a certain twist, for she said, "Surely it would have been better for that missionary, had a millstone been hung about his neck and he cast into the sea! For he caused a little one to stumble, did he not?"

It has been my great privilege to spend quite a long time among this peculiar and enigmatical people, and we have had a number of them educated. It has been a most interesting thing to watch how the old ideas of an uncivilized people come into contact with and then are partially abolished by modern thought. I am well acquainted with an Ainu woman who has been given a good Japanese education, who can play the organ nicely, and who has even been to England. For some time past she has been reading books on what is called "New Thought," of which, by the by, the present generation of Japanese are very fond. We have had much discussion on many points raised, for some of them are not in line with what is termed orthodox Christianity. She is a young lady who does not by any means always take things on trust and so we are at times unable to see eye to eye. One day after a long discussion she said to me; "Sir, I perceive that you are one of the *Genrō-in*" (i.e. Elder Statesmen).

I thought this rather strong. Nevertheless it is the spirit of the age. What a change! And to come as it did from an Ainu woman! It shows progress. However, I let it pass and at once replied: "Yes, yes, just so. Have it so if you wish. But remember this at all

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

462 562 appeared to be very uneasy and non-plussed and begged me to return at once to the hut, as people might see me working there and say many bad things afterward. I very soon found that she scented Mrs. Grundy and so cleared off post haste. I found out later that what the chief had told me about gardening being the woman's privilege was quite true then, though it is not so at the present day, for I am now writing of what I found to be the case 50 years ago. The only garden I ever saw Penri himself working in was a tiny piece of ground in [277] which he had planted a few tobacco roots, the leaves of which were to be dried for his own private consumption.

512 562 In the busy spring time the women used to crawl out of their sleeping places in the small hours of the morning, eat a hasty meal of cold vegetable stew, shoulder their tools and proceed to their gardens to chop and hack their plots and sow their seeds. Late at night they would return carrying big bundles of wood on their backs, do what there was to be done in the house, fetch the water (in this I was allowed to help), cook a big meal, eat it and then lie down to sleep. And what I have sometimes seen them eat was fabulous in- [264] deed. When they had eaten as much as they were able to find room for, I have heard them exclaim with a great deal of relief and satisfaction, *Ibe-acramu-shinne*, and this means, "I am in a state of knowing that I have eaten." And truly they looked like it with their smiling faces and well filled out stomachs. It may be also men- ● 117 tioned here that in many instances I have known the people to go off to their plots of land, where they built themselves small lodges and stayed till their work was done. When Mrs. Penri did this, I cooked and catered for myself, and I made some very fine hashes. Would that I had some of my best friends to help eat them! I once made a stew of wood-peckers, as there was nothing else to be found. But when I took

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

them out of the pot and saw their very long tongues, my appetite departed and I threw the whole lot away. The tongues seemed so unduly long, and round. "Ugh"!

During the summer months the women had perhaps not quite so much to do; still, there was plenty to take up their time. There was the weeding to be attended to in the hot sun; bark to be prepared for manufacturing into cloth; thread to be twisted and weaving to be done; also mats to be made. But as soon as the autumn came round, the millet crops had to be quickly reaped, beans gathered in, turnips and carrots to be pulled and the potatoes to be dug up. The mode of reaping millet was very primitive indeed, for the tool used belonged to the shell and stone age. It consisted in merely walking through the gardens and pinching off each head with a small shell, leaving the straw standing. A little later the women and children would go into the mountains to pick up chestnuts, which are used largely for food, and gather the wild grapes. About this time they also dug up arrow-root (*Lilium Glenni*). After washing and boiling well, the arrow-root is mashed up into pulp, which is made into cakes and dried in the sun for winter food.

These people had no agricultural implements to speak of and they did not manure their gardens. We once had an old man in to do up our bit of garden, whom I asked to spread some manure on the ground he was digging up, for I told him that would enrich the soil. He stared at me and said he would not do so. When I accused him of idleness he told me that I was very unjust. "How so?" I asked him. Said he, "you profess to be a teacher of religion, Sir; yet you would have me dishonour and insult the gods by offering them manure! Will they not of their own free will give you the increase they intend you to have? Do you think you can force their hands? Let the gods do as they will!" I really thought the old man was joking. But.

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

found that even there a somewhat similar custom was kept up by the Maoris. They, men and women too, cry outright and hug and kiss friends who are about to depart on a journey or have just returned from one, and this proceeding lasts for quite a long time on occasion. In India, also, among the Chauhans of the Central Provinces, the women weep on one anothers' necks when they meet after a long separation. And when they thus weep it is a point of etiquette that the elder should stop first and then beg her companion to do so. But if it is doubtful which is the elder, they sometimes go on for a very long time, exciting the young spectators to mirth, until at length some elder steps forward and tells them to stop.

Continuing his instruction, my chief said, "Never enter a house with your shoes on; be sure to take your hat off; never rush in or out of a house, but go quietly and gravely; never look into a house through a window; treat the east-end window as very sacred; never throw anything out of any window; never throw anything into the fire; do not touch another person's fire; do not go eavesdropping; never address a stranger unless he first speaks to you; if it is necessary to address a stranger, first say, 'Your Honour'; when you meet another person step off the path and let him have the right of way; let a woman always, when she meets a man, take off her head-dress, cover her mouth with her hand, step to one side and look upon the ground; let her even turn sidewise; never strike a burning log upon the hearth; never turn the point of any edged tool toward the fire; never by any means allow human hair or nail parings to fall upon the hearth," and so forth. Such were old Penri's rules of etiquette and I think I never lost anything by being careful to conform to them as much as possible.

One day an interesting thing happened while I was in Penri's house. A Japanese traveller came in to have an argument with me on Christianity, for he did

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

● 117 not like a foreigner bringing in a new religion to his country. We talked for quite a long time and at last he got so worked up as to lose his temper. In order to clinch his side of the matter with more emphasis, he wound up by seizing a fire-brand and giving the fire itself a big blow with it, and then stalked out. That was the very worst thing he could have done for himself and his cause, but the best thing possible for me and mine. The Ainu who were present were astonished beyond measure at this great breach of etiquette. The fireplace is the very seat of the goddess of fire, the great ancestress of the Ainu race. It was a fearful insult to her and to all of them. With that blow both the man and his arguments lost all respect.

354 778 372

574 576 I found the Ainu a very hospitable people, but sometimes guests would outstay their welcome. What, then, could be done to get them to leave? In such a case Penri told me that his people made a kind of feast which was named "The feast of being sent back, the mouth having been cooked for." By making this feast and calling in a few friends to share it with the guest, a big hint was given him that his absence would be more valued than his presence. When the feast was over the friends would all bid him "good bye!" If he did not take the hint and continued to stay on, the hostess would go with her husband and lodge with a neighbour till he walked off. I have seen this done once only. I thought it was a splendid idea and in the case I have in mind it was not considered as a breach of etiquette, nor did it destroy friendship. It was a well understood proceeding.

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

177
117 sufficient and so the lecture ended, and all went away happy.

117 But sometimes the people, some of them at least, used to strike me as being a little stupid. The following incidents will show, in part, why I came to that conclusion.

As I was expecting letters, I said to the chief one evening, "I want you to get up at dawn tomorrow morning and go down to the coast post-office and ask if there are any letters for me. It is only a matter of fifteen miles, so you ought to be back again sometime in the evening." He went. Very late at night he returned. I heard him enter the hut and called from my sleeping place to know if there were any for me. "Yes," he replied, "several." "All right. Blow up the fire. I will be with you in a minute," I said. Well, I got up expecting to receive what he had brought. "Where are they?" I inquired. "I haven't got them," he replied. "But how is that?" I asked. His reply was, "You did not tell me to bring them, but to inquire as to whether there were any. And there are." I said no more but trotted off to bed again and thought. I became like Br'er Rabbit, of whom it is said, "He lay low, and he say nuffin." I was busy learning lessons in those days. And still am.

Our old Ainu servant died a few years ago and we afterwards sent his wife away. Another woman came to be taught, by her special request, but we found she was such a wonderful forgetter that we could not keep her long. One day I asked her to run out and put a letter I wanted to get off quickly into a pillar-box near at hand. A few hours later I found this same letter had been posted in our very own letter-box at the front door! The fact is, we had caught her wild and she had evidently not yet learned about pillar-boxes.

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

CHAPTER XV

ABOUT MASCOTS

When writing about "That Wicked Missionary" a good Japanese friend sent me a sort of mascot, concerning which I wish to say a few words. I am not fully sure that the term "mascot" quite fits the object, but anyway it will serve my purpose here as well as "talisman," "charm" or what not.

During the late World War and ever since one has heard much of mascots. They are now in vogue everywhere in Europe and appear to have come there to stay. I believe they are kept "for luck," and bespeak a certain amount of superstition. At least, such is the impression I have got about them. I am assured that the Ainu also have had mascots of various kinds from time immemorial, and what we find them using today are but fetishes or relics of the same.

As these people sit at their feasts or when they perform any function or ceremony of importance, the men may be seen wearing crowns of two kinds. Those the younger of them wear are called *inauru*, i.e. "filament fetish," and those the more important men don are called *ekashpa-umbe*, i.e. "things crowning the elders." They are all made of long shavings and strips of bark and cloth. But on the front of those the elders wear are to be seen carved images of such things as bears, wolves, foxes, kites, eagles, jays, sparrows and other creatures, while on their moustache-lifters, which they use to hold their moustaches out of whatever they may be drinking, are to be found representations of various marine animals and fishes. These

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

CHAPTER XIX

CHIEF PENRI ON SNAKES

I had not been staying in Chief Penri's home long before I became aware that he had lost the points of two of his toes. I asked him about this one day and he informed me that it was all owing to the spite of a fiendish viper. He said, "As I was walking along a narrow path one day, I suddenly felt a sharp prick in my toes and, on looking down, saw a viper slipping off into the scrub. I knew it had bitten me and that the bites of such creatures often proved fatal. I therefore quickly sat down and with a small knife cut into the ends of both toes and made them bleed profusely. In this way I thought to get rid of the poison. Nevertheless, both members festered and would not heal for a long time. But in the end, although they got better, I was left with the wounds you see." And with a strong feeling of disgust and in a deep, gruff voice he added, "The spiteful fiend!"

I am sure it must have taken a great deal of courage and cool nerve for him thus to sit down and cut his toes, and as soon as I heard this explanation I could no longer wonder at his great dislike to all of the snake kind. Whenever we were travelling together along narrow paths, unless it was after sundown, he always wished me to walk in front to scare away these vermin. He went barefoot and unprotected, while I wore thick boots through which no snake could bite. At night, however, he would go first, carrying a piece of smouldering touch-wood along with him, which he waved to and fro sharply in front of his feet, near the

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

CHAPTER XX

CHIEF PENRI'S MOTHER DIES

One day Penri and I were out walking as usual, 117● when I found that he most strongly objected to going to a particular spot I wished to see, not far from the path. Nothing I could say would induce him to go near the place and he was exceedingly anxious that I should not go either. After a great deal of questioning, he confessed that he was afraid to go there because someone had been buried at that spot. The idea prompting him to keep away from the grave was a religious one, and thoroughly in line with his animistic belief. He was certain that the human spirit still [775 lived on, haunting the place, and that if disturbed it 776] would do both bodily and spiritual harm to any who intruded on its domain, for it was then very busy withdrawing itself from its gross matter as it decayed, and must not be interfered with. When he told me this, I remembered something which happened some time before. It was this.

About 11 o'clock one morning, as I was sitting by the hearth writing up my notes, the chief came to me with a look of real concern on his countenance, and asked me if I would very kindly stay indoors all day and not even look out of the window. He himself had to be excused till late in the afternoon. Without question I at once consented to do as he wished, whereat he seemed greatly relieved. As soon as he returned about 5 p.m., he came up to me and asked whether I had kept my promise, and when I replied, "Yes, to the very letter," he was delighted and said, "Then that's all right. Thank you." When I inquired as to where

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

● 117 he had been and why he desired me to lie so close, he informed me that he had been to officiate as chief at a funeral, and the people did not like strangers to see where they hid their dead away. Knowing something about their thoughts on death and burial and what was supposed to happen after, I let the subject abide then, intending to find out more at some future time. The opportunity came with the death of Chief Penri's mother.

[761 764 609]

I had been away on furlough in England and when I returned I went off again to Piratori to visit old friends and scenes. There I heard of the death of my old friend—Penri's mother—of sugar and tobacco fame. She was dead and buried. Though it was not customary for the Ainu to talk of deceased persons, I thought that I might perhaps venture to inquire about this old lady, for she and I had really become very good friends, old witch though she was. I broached the subject and got along very well till I asked to be allowed to visit her grave. The chief demurred at this and said he could not take me. At last, however, he consented to show me the way. Off we went, but he would not go to within some sixty yards of the spot, and I had therefore to proceed alone. There he stood far off, watching and directing me. The dear old man was actually afraid of his old mother's ghost! He excused his timidity with the following piece of lore: "If a person should tread upon a grave, it matters not how old it may be, he will surely be punished. Therefore take warning. Beware!" All I could see at the grave was a post set up at the head and a few broken utensils scattered about over the place. The branches covering it were from the unlucky elder tree.

761

[764]

Self-preservation is undoubtedly among the first laws of nature. Penri knew this and acted upon it largely, for I found that he had not merely a kindly

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

regard for my skin, but great concern for his own also. 761
And naturally so, indeed. Knowing that I was bent on going to such a dangerous place as his mother's grave, he evidently gave notice of the fact to his relations and friends. And they forthwith prepared to meet the emergency. When we returned to the hut I found a man and several women gathered about the doorway, [783]
all smiles and good will. They begged me to submit to an exorcising and purifying rite! They had bowls of water for us and asked us to wash our faces and hands. This was the purification part of the rite. While this was in progress, the women beat and brushed us down with fetishes and bunches of grass. This was to drive out any evil spirits or seeds of disease implanted within us by the deceased old woman for trespassing on her domain. That done, we were received once again among the people and allowed to enter the hut. I suppose the antidote worked all right, for neither of us seemed to get any harm from our little visit.

There was also, I found later, one other reason why 117
the Chief was so reluctant to take me to his mother's grave. A very few years before I came to Hokkaidō some people had come and secretly dug up a few Ainu skeletons from their resting places to use as specimens for scientific studies. As soon as this was known by them it caused a great uproar, for it touched them on a very tender spot. After that they were very much afraid of other like visitations, and so were particularly careful to keep the place of burial secret. It was really very wonderful that Penri should have taken me, and showed unbounded confidence in me.

In a previous chapter I mentioned finding an old 888
woman living in a little hut quite alone. I have seen 761
many such in my time here. These are built for the aged to die in, and, as soon as the inmate has passed away, are burned down. Penri's mother had her tiny hut and in it she died. It, too, was sent off in flames

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

761 right before her very eyes and all were talking about the funeral! They were embroidering gloves for her hands in patterns of white, and also socks, a head-dress and an outer garment. They chatted in quite a lively way, the dying lady herself joining in. I told her that she ought to be quiet and asked her if she really wanted to die. "Oh, no. I want to live," she said.

I treated her in my own fashion for twenty minutes, by which time all of what she designated as "spear-thrust-picking-pains," which came every time she breathed, had gone quite away, and her pulse had returned to normal. She declared that she felt quite cured. I gave her some gruel made very thin and packed off the women to their homes, telling them to retain their death wailings for another occasion. They went out giggling like a pack of hysterical school girls. The lady lived for ten years after this and kept well. I verily believe that apart from the illness, those terrible suggestions of death which the making of the clothing produced, would have killed her if I had not appeared on the scenes. However that may be, the point I desire to make is that this woman did not fear death in the least. And I know there are others like her in this.

● 117 As I was one day passing through the village of Piratori Panata, I heard a great wailing for the dead going on in the hut of an old friend named Kanturuka. He was a good old fellow of about eighty, and he had given me quite a big lot of old folk-lore and told me many stories. He was not much liked by some of the villagers, and was nicknamed the "divine hare." The [825 hare, I found, was looked upon as the very lowest of 776] the animal divinities and the name was given to my friend because he was not regarded very highly by his neighbours. However, I liked him very well and we had many happy times together.

761 I walked in to see who had died and found that it was Kanturuka himself. He had fallen down in a fit,

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

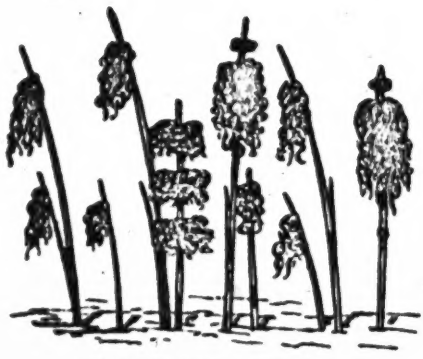
strong that it very soon makes them fall over drunk, where they lie and sing or sleep. Over the fireplace there hangs a frame upon which cereals and other things are put to dry. Unless one is careful, this is liable to catch fire and give trouble. I now quote part of a letter an Ainu wrote me a little while ago which bears on this point.

"On the evening of November 20 a house-warming feast was held at Fu. The people drank a great deal of *saké* and neat alcohol and many got intoxicated. Some of the stuff caught fire and the newly-made house was completely burnt down." This was a terribly hot hut-warming festival!

Did the people stick to their old native millet beer, no harm would be done, for there is very little alcohol in it. It is the colour of milk and quite thick. The taste is a trifle sour, but it is very fattening. But as for the Japanese *shōchū*—neat alcohol—it is a real danger in every way. I knew of a man—and I am telling no mere fairy tale—who one day took home a big bottle of this *shōchū*. Arrived there, he sat down by his hearth and forthwith began to do what he would call a "great enjoyment." He soon toppled over near the fire and here his breath caught fire and there was spontaneous combustion. His whole house quickly went up in smoke!

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

self became a Christian, he said that he gave up making fetishes, and this so astonished his people that they came and walked round his house outside to see what he had instead of the *nusa*, and went inside to see what gods he had in place of the *inau*. When they could find nothing, all they could say was that he was an *inau-sabgure*, i.e. "a man without fetishes," that he was an atheist and so had cut himself off from his people and their gods.



NUSA OR INAU CLUSTERS

One day a man came to our house in Sapporo and asked if I would kindly let him have a good look at my God! I was greatly astonished at this request, and told him that such a thing was an absolute impossibility, because my God is spirit and can not be seen with material eyes. "Oh, no, He isn't," he said, "for I have already seen Him, only I want to have a closer look at him." I could not make out what he was driving at, so I said, "Where have you seen Him? Show me." "Why, there," he replied, pointing just outside my study to the top of the stairs, "up there." I was much amused, for there on the landing I had set up a very old black suit of Japanese armour,—the ugliest thing I have ever come across. I took him up to look at it

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

117 and, after an examination, he nearly fell down with laughter. This man was the Mr. Tee, the great hunter, whose story is told in a later chapter.

778 688 It was a very serious thing for anyone to interfere with the Ainu fetishes or to go near the *nusa*. One day a couple of young Japanese fellows came to stay in a village we were in, and the people did not wish them to be there, for they often got too near the fetishes and looked in at the house windows. That they got among our chickens and appropriated some of the eggs, we well knew, and I was just about to bring the fact to their notice and make them move on when, fortunately for me, they got themselves turned out. No doubt it was done thoughtlessly and with no evil intent, but they forcibly pulled up an *inau* fetish, examined it and then tore it to pieces. They were observed, and within a couple of hours there was such a noise made by the inhabitants that they thought it best to leave without saying "good bye." This was a flagrant case of desecration and could not be passed over. These young men were not vicious, but inconsiderate and stupid. No harm was intended, of that I am sure. Ah, well, let us hope they learned their lesson and profited thereby.

117 One morning as I was passing through a certain village with an Ainu, we heard that someone was ill in one of the huts, and it was suggested that we should go in and see the sufferer. On entering, we found that it was a woman suffering from hard labor. We did not stay long, but I was asked to offer up a word of prayer and touch her head with my hand. This I willingly did, to the great satisfaction of all, but especially of the lady herself. When we returned home toward evening, we were told that all had passed off well, and I thus gained a few more friends.

775 There used to be an idea current among the people that persons are sometimes reborn into this world, especially when the Great God of all has some parti-

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

CHAPTER XXVII

MY FRIENDS TEE AND ARIMAKNA

Among my very early friends was Tee. This Ainu 115
was a very silent man and of a meek disposition, and, except when hunting bears, was quite gentle in all his ways. I often think of him as one of nature's gentlemen. Both he and his wife were most courteous and kind, and I enjoyed staying with them. They lived in the very last house of the village farthest up the Saru River. There were no Japanese among the Ainu up there at that time, so their customs and language were pure Ainu. Whenever I think of the quiet, free, unanxious life they lived up there and compare that time with the present I cannot help sighing. But those halcyon days departed when the tax collector and modern civilization came in. I quite enjoyed seeing their life of quiet security and simplicity, alas, now gone for ever. It was only a very short time ago that I was asked by an old man whether I thought the old free-from-care times would ever return. He said he was very tired of the present state of things and thought there was something wrong somewhere! And surely he was right.

One day I told Chief Penri that I wished to go up 117
the track by the river and visit the other villages, but he greatly surprised me by saying that he could not take me up. "In that case, I suppose I must go alone, then," I said. But he begged me not to go. "Why don't you wish me to go up?" I asked. After a good deal of talk, he told me that he had received instructions from an official that he was to take me no higher up the river along the track. "The Japanese were re-

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

117 sponsible for my safety and great care was to be taken of me," they told him. "Oh, that is all right and very kind of the local authorities, but I have a passport which gives me authority to travel that way, so it is quite all right. Don't worry," I said, "but you need not come, for you must not do what the authorities forbid you." And there the matter was left, excepting that I heard the old man sigh repeatedly when he saw me making preparations to start on the morrow. At last, with a big grunt he jumped up and went out. And I saw him no more that night.

At daybreak next morning the chief came to my bedside and whispered, "Sir, I am going with you. I have thought of a plan. I was only told that I must not take you along the paths, but nothing at all was said about the river. I have a boat ready. Come." I was not in the least worried as to my personal safety, even though there were no police up there in those days, for I knew the Ainu were my friends and would do me no harm, and that they were a very gentle people. And so we went. And this is the way in which I first came to know several of the chiefs and my very good friend Tee. I only stayed a short time on this occasion and got back to Piratori without meeting with any fanatics, or accidents of any kind.

114 115 After a few years had passed I went and stayed with the Tee family and had a very happy and enlightening time there. The only drawback was the small smoky hut, for the smoke was, I found, very hard on my eyes. Mr. Tee was a mighty bear-hunter and told me he had taken as many as nine of these fierce animals in one season, all by himself with his dogs. That was a pretty good bag and the pelts brought him in quite a good round sum of money.

231 It was in his house that I gained my first close experience with a bear cub. They had a very tiny one

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

CHAPTER XL

ON PATHOLOGY

One day, during my travels, I met an Ainu friend who was out hunting. When he learned that I was expecting to pass through his village and spend a day or two there, he asked me to carry a small parcel and hand it to his wife. On giving it to me he added, "Will you please take great care of it, for it is very precious." "Certainly, I will gladly take it along for you. But, what, may I ask, does it contain? What could you have found so precious out in these wild parts?" I asked. "Oh," he replied, "it is the dried heart of an otter." "What a curious thing to send to your wife! Why do you wish her to have it? Is it for her to eat or how will she use it?" "Ah," he returned, "the heart of the river otter is a good medicine and is particularly powerful against stomach troubles." Then he added, "I have heard that a good deal of diarrhoea is prevailing among the villages of my district, and this should be used as a charm and antidote." "How should it be used?" I asked. He replied, "A small portion should be cut off and chopped up very fine and well boiled in a little water. When well cooked, the whole decoction should be swallowed. The effect of this medicine is marvellous, for the magic power is great. Not only does it work cures, but also prevents the demons of disease from coming near a person who has taken any of it."

Another friend, who seemed to be well up in Ainu ideas concerning pathology, said to me, "Various diseases attack the bodies of men and women. Such,

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

CHAPTER XLVII

SOME SHOOTING INCIDENTS

In our very early days in Hokkaidô there were times when we could get no animal food to eat. We found this very trying in the winter. I therefore determined to buy a gun and try to better matters in this respect. After the gun came, I was able to keep our larder well stocked with such things as wild duck, snipe, wood-cock, tree-grouse, hares, and now and then wild geese. But as the years passed, times so changed that now one can only think of those early days and smack his lips.

One day an English gentleman and his wife came to visit us at Sapporo. They were supporters of Missions and it was my pleasure to take the gentleman with me to some of the rougher places of the interior. Just before starting, my friend saw me cleaning my gun, when he informed me that he was very sorry to see that I shot, and that he did not consider it right for a missionary to shoot birds and animals. So, in order not to offend one of our supporters, I put my gun out of sight. His dear good wife also, being of like opinion, had the grace to tell my spouse, who had a couple of very pretty duck wings in her hat, that she did not think ladies ought to wear feathers!

My friend and well-wisher soon started off with me on our tour, and in a few days we arrived at a hamlet in the interior, where an old Ainu friend had put up two nice rooms in his house, in which I always stayed. As it happened, I had not brought a very big supply of tinned provisions with me, so it was not long before we ran out of animal food.

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

117 One morning we found the cupboard was as bare as that of the famous Mother Hubbard. In alarm, my friend asked what we were going to do about breakfast and dinner. "Ah," I returned, "that's the question. What shall we do? There is a little rice, but plenty of millet and vegetables to be got." The gentleman was not too well pleased. So I went into my room and fished my gun out from among my clothes, where I had hidden it, and passed out before him. He was, in fact, busy writing at a table. "Surely," thought I, "I have you on toast this time."

Within forty yards of our rooms, a quail got up at my feet. He rose with a startling whirl from under my very nose. "Bang"! went my gun and I forthwith picked up my breakfast. I had no sooner secured my bird than I heard a loud voice coming from the window, "There goes another! Look! Quick!" The poor man saw his breakfast flying away and was evidently afraid of losing it! "Bang"! sounded my gun again and down came my friend's breakfast also. And he was very much pleased. Out he rushed and said, "Ah, I think it is all right to shoot for food, but I do not like shooting for mere sport." "Come along," said I, "let us go and pick up a few dinners if we can." Away we went and returned with a bag of seven or eight fine, fat tree-grouse and a few quails. These lasted us for some time, and when they were eaten up we went and got more, and a few duck as well. So my companion saw that whether clergy or laymen, "a man's a man for a' that," and must be fed.

[825] It is supposed among ourselves that the fox is the most wily animal of the forests, but the Ainu say "No, not so. The bear is the most artful of all." That may be true, but I think all animals have their little tricks, which they play when hard pressed. One day an Ainu friend and I went out to try and shoot something to eat, for I was very tired of nothing but millet and

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

vegetables. As we were going along, we chanced to hit upon the tracks a fox had made in the snow, and I asked my friend whether we should go and see if we could get its skin. "No," he said very emphatically, "not if you wish to shoot a hare or some ducks." "But why?" I asked. "What has that got to do with it?" Then he said, "if you kill a fox the first thing, you will be certain not to get any good game today." "I don't see why," I replied. "Oh," he returned, "that is because you do not understand how to hunt. If you kill a fox, his spirit will immediately come out of his body and travel round and tell all the other animals and the birds also that you are after them." So we left the fox alone and got on to a hare. My friend told me that in olden times, whenever the men killed a fox while hunting, they always tied his mouth up tightly so as to prevent his spirit from getting out and going off to spread the news.

Another incident happened very near our home in Sapporo one afternoon. It was winter and I put on a pair of broad Canadian show-shoes and went out to find our dinner for the next day. It was not long before I discovered the tracks of a hare, which I followed up for some time. I saw the animal before me but after about an hour of patiently following him in hope, lost him completely. I then returned home and reported my failure. The next day I went again to the same place and as a little more snow had fallen during the night, quickly found his new foot prints. I put the animal up and again followed him, but once more lost him. As I was returning home along my own snow-shoe track, I was surprised to find that the hare had been following me on the very path I had made! I wondered at his sagacity and returned home once more empty-handed. The next morning I got up and went again to have it out with him. I put him up and followed him. We went in a big circle, but after a time

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

up-throat,' that is 'hollow. They are so named, he said, because they resemble the human throat, being hollow. Continuing our conversation, I got hold of a quite new and interesting phrase. It was, *iwen kut koro guru*, which, being interpreted, is "a person with six throats." When it is remembered that six is the perfect number among this race, one is not at all surprised to learn that the phrase is intended to designate "a perfect liar." I listened to this, wondered, and was much amused.

Having one evening reached a certain village, I lodged with the chief, an old friend with whom I had stayed many times before. About midnight a cat began to caterwaul atrociously just outside the reed wall, close to my head. Sleep I could not. At last, in despair, I roared out to no one in particular, "Oh, do shoot that cat!" Shortly afterwards there came a terrific 'bang' not far from my ears, just outside the hut. The poor cat had met with an accident from which it never recovered. The chief had shot it! Thenceforth I was very careful as to what orders I gave the people.

I had a plate with three artificial teeth to it. Those teeth were resting in a cup of water by my side, as it happened, in the same hut as that in which the cat incident occurred. In the morning, when I awoke, both water and teeth were gone and neither I nor my man could find them. That same afternoon the chief came up to our stopping place a few villages away, mysteriously carrying something carefully in his hand, wrapped up in a leaf. Said he, "I think this must be yours, Sir." I took the leaf and there were the missing teeth nestling inside. "Where did you get these from?" I asked. "Oh," he replied, "I found them close to a rat hole near where you slept last night."

At a village in which we spent the night among well-known friends, a little girl brought me a nice tray of boiled chestnuts as a present from her mother. Their jackets had been taken off, so that we were able

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924)1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

CHAPTER LIV

POSSESSION BY FOXES

The village of Usu, which is situated upon the southern coast of Hokkaidō in Volcano Bay, is a very beautiful place. As its name implies, it has "many bays," and such are always pleasing to the eye. Half a century ago we knew all the inhabitants, and from that time to the present we have always had many good friends among them. The Ainu were all fishing folk and had a full amount of superstition. I can never forget a little incident which happened there once and which seemed to give much amusement to the people present, particularly to the younger ones among them. 117 ●

I was giving an address to a large assembly in one of the houses. As there was no chair to be had and it was very painful for me to sit cross-legged upon the floor, and as, moreover, I could not stand up to speak on account of the smoke from burning wood upon the hearth, the good house-wife fished out a Japanese foot-warmer frame (*kotatsu*) for me to sit on and so speak to the people. About the middle of my speech, when I had warmed up a little, the top of my improvised seat gave way with a snap and thus let me down. I landed with my feet sticking up in the air at one end, and my head level with them at the other. None of my addresses to the Ainu have ever produced such a profound impression as that one did. The hut was filled with roars of laughter, in which I could not but join. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. The incident is not yet forgotten, for I heard of it again but a few days ago; indeed, it was one who was then pre- [516]

2: Batchelor M-5 (1877-1924) 1927
AB6 Ainu AB6

117 sent, as a little lad, and who very kindly helped to pull me out of the contraption, who brought the incident to my mind again, at which we both resumed our laugh begun more than 40 years ago!

787 754 As I was one day wandering about the outskirts of the village, I met a young Ainu woman who said, with a scared look upon her face and in a hushed voice, as though afraid of being overheard, "O Sir, please do not go near yonder house, for there is great danger there." "But why?" I asked. "Whatever danger can there be in broad daylight like this? Come, tell me all about it." She replied, casting a frightened look about her, "A woman lives there who is said to be possessed by a fox, and she bewitches people." "Oh, indeed," I replied, "possessed by a fox, is she! That is serious, is it not ? But how do you know? Is she ill? Have you seen the fox which has got hold of her?" To this she replied, "No; but all say she is possessed. Many people have reported that they have seen a big fox more than once coming out of or entering into her house by the east end window, on moonlight nights. And thus it is proved that she is fox-possessed."

This young lady firmly believed, with others, that the woman could turn herself into a fox or back into a human being at will, and bewitch folks when so inclined. Moreover, it was also thought that she was able to render herself visible or invisible as she pleased. It was really so believed by the young woman who was warning me. I did not contradict her at all, but thanked her and told her I would certainly be very careful. This pleased her and so we parted company.

Later on, I again met this same young woman and gathered some information from her as to her creed with reference to this matter. She told me that such as are possessed by foxes have power to make people ill and so destroy them. Such persons sometimes die